

CUSP CUFC Meeting

The minutes of the CUSP CUFC Meeting held at 7.30pm on 11 August 2022

Present

CUFC: Alex Tunbridge, Shaun Grady, Dave Matthew-Jones

CUSP: Ben Payne (Chair), David Burkett (Vice-Chair), Philip Saich (Secretary), Nigel Browne, Chris Neild, Danielle Foster

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Godric Smith.

Catering

The schedule of an early start to the season and having the first game at home meant that the Club were tight for time on catering improvements. The contract with Premier Foods was terminated, two new outlets with mass cooking units were purchased, which house two 150-capacity ovens. Payment processing had to be addressed and 28 wifi devices have been introduced and appear to be working well. The decision to go cashless was to speed up service and reduce accounting resource. Signage has been slow to come in but is now in place and two canopies will be fitted shortly.

The Norwich game had a presale of 3,000 and a walk up of 1,000 compared to a usual walk up of 250-300. It was also the hottest day of the year on record and there was a significant no show from catering staff and stewards. Hull saw an improvement as did MK Dons. The Club is learning about reasonable staffing levels but is working against a backdrop of festivals, hot weather and a hospitality industry with 176,000 vacancies, so it's a tough environment.

Quality of food is a work in progress, mystery shoppers are in place and the Club's catering provider have been positively engaged in addressing feedback.

Overall, it's acknowledged that there remains room for improvement, especially within the NRE area. Transaction numbers are increasing and that is the focus, but a little patience is needed. Bottled beer will replace draught in extreme heat, chocolate won't be sold when it's too hot and a full selection of food will be on offer in the Habbin. The Club would welcome ongoing feedback on the catering to help with continued improvement.

Tannoy/PA

The Club engaged a company to make changes to the PA system in June, and the Lottery funded 50% of those works. This involved putting new speakers in the NRE and a new control module in the main stand to enable a roving microphone on the pitch. The former has been done but equipment is needed for the latter which will be installed in advance of the Burton game. A new PA host in place. Ideally the version of Coconuts with less talking in the intro will be played on exit when we win.

Under 18s and Scholars info on the website

This is improving. The media team are updating the headshots and will supplement coverage but this is largely dependent on workload, with the addition of the Women's team in recent weeks.

Kids Zone

The Kids Zone is being reviewed with more facilities to be added. Players will visit each week and it will only run on Saturdays.

Programmes

The Club underestimated demand for programmes for MK Dons – they printed 750 and sold out – and this is in part due to the popularity of the stickers book. Stickers can be bought later if needed.

Replica shirts

35% of the Club's order was flown in and sold out immediately. The balance is due in this week. We're in a good position compared to many of the other league clubs and training and leisure wear has also been selling well.

Mascots

Matchday packages are sold out for August and there's limited availability for the rest of the season. It isn't feasible to include four tickets within the £100 package but things are under constant review as the main objective is to provide a really good experience.

Ballboys/ballgirls

All matches are now covered up until Boxing Day and many kids are returning to watch future matches, which is excellent.

Codfather offer

The Club will check on this, although the Club would prefer fans to eat at the ground rather than elsewhere. The Club is looking at the possibility of partnering with local establishments to offer discounts and the ability to implement loyalty points. This is likely to be an addition to Abbey Access next season.

Scoreboards

The setup with the scoreboard has been improved and the controls will be moved into the PA room by the end of the month. This will enable live updates. The scoreboards could be extended by adding more boxes, but this would need additional budget.

Hospitality

The design and build for the new hospitality area was gifted by local companies and the Club are very thankful and pleased with the outcome.

Ground purchase

The purchase of the Abbey is proceeding well. Deals of this nature are inevitably detailed and complex but it is hoped that it will conclude shortly. An update will be provided in the CEO Matchday Programme Notes for the Southampton game.

Shadow Board

A working group including CUSP, CFU, AB and the Club have met 6 times over the summer. It is hoped that there will be an announcement in the coming weeks on the SB and that the first meeting will take place in the early autumn.

Training ground

This project is ongoing and there should be news to report in mid-September.

'Money can't buy' prizes for season ticket holders

The Club is happy to receive a list of potential prizes and to decide what's possible in the current climate.

Women's football

This is a focus for the Club, with four matches at the Abbey and other initiatives to be announced in the coming months.

Date of next meeting

This will be confirmed in due course.